

Message Text

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67

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1035
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T PONTA DELGADA 0191

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINT, PO
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH MAPA LEADERS

REF: STATE 726

1. AT THEIR REQUEST ON NOVEMBER 6, MET WITH FRANCISCO COSTA MATOS, FRANCISCO GOMES DEMENESES, AND ANOTHER LEADER OF MOVEMENTO PARA AUTONOMIADO POVO ACOREANO (GAPA). MENESES STATED THAT CIVIL GOVERNOR OF PONTA DELGADA CALLED MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF POLITICAL PARTIES LAST THURSDAY, ASKED THEM ISSUE JOINT COMMUNIQUE DENOUNCING MAPA AS FASCIST AND REACTIONARY. REPRESENTATIVE PARTID POPULAR DEMORATICO (PPD) REFUSED AND ADVISED MAPA OF PLAN. CIVIL GOVERNOR HAS GONE TO LISBON TO ASK CENTRAL AUTHORITIES TO EMPOWER HIM TO SUSPEND MAPA. MENESES STATED VIEW THAT IF MAPA SUSPENDED, PPD WOULD SOON FOLLOW AND ISLANDS WOULD EXPERIENCE CONVULSION RESULTING IN DESTRUCTION OF MODERATE AND RIGHT WING ELEMENTS IN AZORES.

2. MENESES WENT ON TO ASK IF UNITED STATES COULD NOT APPLY PRESSURE IN LISBON TO PREVENT OFFICIAL SUSPENSION OF MAPA. WE EXPLAINED THAT UNITED STATES UNWILLING INTERFERE IN PORTUGUESE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND THAT USG MOREOVER DID NOT CONSIDER COMMUNIST TAKE OVER OF PORTUGAL AS INEVITABLE AS HE SEEMED TO THINK.

3. WE INQUIRED AS TO STRENGTH OF MAPA THROUGHOUT ARCHIPELAGO AND WERE TOLD THAT EXACT FIGURES UNKNOWN. MAPA PRESENTLY

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DISTRIBUTING TWENTY THOUSAND MEMBERSHIP FORMS AND GOOD RESULTS

BEING GOTTEN ON FAIAL, PICO, FLORES, BUT NOT TERCEIRA OR SAO JORGE.

4. GROUP INSISTED THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION THAT MAPA AIM IS ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY. WHEN ASKED HOW AZORES COULD REMAIN AUTONOMOUS IF PORTUGAL WENT COMMUNIST, THEY STATED THAT AIM WAS ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY PRIOR TO WRITING OF NEW CONSTITUTION SO THAT IT COULD FORM BASIS FOR INDEPENDENCE IF EXPECTED COMMUNIST TAKEOVER ACTUALLY OCCURRED. CONVERSATION ENDED WITH REMARK BY COSTA MATOS SUGGESTING THAT MAPA MIGHT ATTEMPT INFLUENCE USG THROUGH PERSUADING AZOREANS RESIDING IN US WRITE TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS.

5. COMMENT: MAPA IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH GROUP REPRESENTED BY NUNO VASCO CABRAL DACAMARA (REFTEL). MAPA WELL KNOWN AND ENJOYS CERTAIN AMOUNT SUPPORT AT LEAST ON SAO MIGUEL WHILE CAMARA GROUP VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN. MAPA IN EXISTENCE SINCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER APRIL REVOLUTION BUT ONLY DURING LAST TWO WEEKS HAS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITY BEYOND WRITING ARTICLES FOR PONTA DELGADA NEWS PAPERS. IN RECENT PERIOD MAPA REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP FORMS AND LEAFLETS IN OTHER ISLANDS AND MAPA INITIALS HAVE BEEN SPRAYED ON WALLS AND STREETS ALL OVER SAO MIGUEL. IDEA OF MORE AUTONOMY FOR AZORES GENERALLY ACCEPTED THROUGHOUT ARCHIPELAGO AND BOTH SOCIALISTS AND PPD HAVE ENDORSED IT. CONVERSATION INDICATES THAT MAPA BELIEVES THAT EVEN IF SOCIALISTS OR PPD WIN EVENTUAL ELECTIONS THEY WILL BE UNDERMINED BY THE CONMMUNISTS AND WILL NOT GOVERN LONG. IT IS FOR THIS REASON (AND BECAUSE MAPA IS TO THE RIGHT OF THESE PARTIES) THAT MAPA TAKES SEPARATE STAND. WE GATHER FROM OTHER MAPA SOURCE THAT THEY HOPE TO OBTAIN ENOUGH SIGNATURES ON MEMBERSHIP FORMS TO BE ABLE FORCE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO REFERENDUM ON AUTONOMY BEFORE MARCH ELECTIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ARTICLES AND BROADCASTS SUPPORTING MAPA POSITION HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN AZOREAN COMMUNITIES IN US AND CONVERSATION INDICATES THAT FURTHER EFFORTS MAY BE MADE IN THIS DIRECTION. FACT REMAINS HOWEVER THAT MAPA LEADERS TARNISHED BY ASSOCIATIONS WITH FORMER REGIME AND HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON WITH MASS OF AZORIANS. WE HAVE LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR PRESENT CAMPAIGN WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT POPULAR SUPPORT AND EVEN LESS TO BELIEVE THAT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT REFERENDUM. DANIELS

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